DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 139 479 JC 770 302

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TITLE Community Education, Social Equalization, and Other Whimseys.
PUB DATE 6 May 77
NOTE 24p.; Paper presented at the Illinois Community College Presidents' Workshop (St. Charles, Illinois, May 5-7, 1977)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS College Curriculum; *College Role; Community Colleges; *Community Education; *Community Services; Community Support; Educational Benefits; Educational Opportunities; *Equal Education; *Junior Colleges; Learning Experience; Lower Class Students; Objectives; Social Class; *Social Mobility

ABSTRACT

The community colleges fail to respond adequately to critics who say that they perpetuate social inequity and to proposals that they expand their role in community education. Critics who charge that the colleges serve to maintain the class structure in America fail to recognize that progress toward equality of educational opportunity cannot lessen inequality of condition or of effect. Community colleges cannot break down class distinctions or move entire groups from one social stratum to another; but, as the main point of entry and reentry into higher education, they can assist the upward mobility of individuals. The idea of community education or community building as the new mandate for the community college also confuses concept and purpose. Proponents, seeking community support through community services, fail to understand the difference between a sequenced, measured curriculum and the diffuse, unsequenced presentations typically offered in community education--between learning and the awarding of credits. The college leader should point out the distinctions between social equalization and equal access, between curriculum and presentations, to help his colleagues and constituents realize that the college that teaches best uplifts its community most. (Author/JDS)

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ED139479

Keynote Address to the Illinois Community College Presidents' Workshop, St. Charles, Ill. May 6, 1977

Community Education, Social Equalization, and Other Whimseys

Arthur M. Cohen

A meeting where two-year college presidents agree to talk about institutional philosophy for a day and a half is as rare as it is welcome. Karl Jacob's introduction to this meeting states that the community college is no longer the prodigal child of higher education, that it is now at "a watershed period" in its development. "What is meant by a watershed period" he says, "is that there does not appear to be an overriding theme to describe the community college--such as developmental, open door, or people's college--that universalizes the mission of the two-year institution."

I have used Karl's remarks as the beginning point for my address because, along with him, I perceive the colleges' lack of an overriding theme. I believe that lack affects not only college image but also college operations, the way spokesmen respond to criticism, and the perceptions held by those who are concerned with administering and governing the institutions or with teaching students in them.

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Viewing all this literature over the years reinforces the conclusion that the community colleges do not function under a plausible categorical imperative. Their spokesmen are either disinclined to lead the institution toward one or unaware of the lack. They set forth mission statements and goals, priorities and targets, but no unconditionally and universally binding set of moral obligations. They may feel they are declaiming a belief system when they say the colleges strive to meet everyone's educational needs, but that is a patently untenable premise. They come closer when they say the colleges provide access to higher education for all, and closer still when they say the colleges assist individuals to move up in social class or to learn to the limits of their potential. But the implications of those assertions are rarely argued.

The community college suffers from a dearth of dialecticians. There is no forum, no applied reason. Accordingly when a state governor criticizes the hobby courses, as California's Brown did, or a researcher professes that students beginning in two-year colleges are exceedingly less likely to earn baccalaureate degrees, as UCLA's Astin did, the college administrators react not with serious debate over the allegations but with considered evasion. "The hobby courses cost the state nothing," they report disingeneously. "The students who don't get baccalaureate degrees didn't want them in the first place. And besides, Look at what we are doing for older, returning women." Failing a considered philosophical ground, they retreat to one and another sophistical position.

In all fairness there are good reasons why equivocation is the prime doctrine in community colleges. One is that inconsistency is characteristic of all types of schools. Sam Gould has called it a public relations world,

saying, "We seem uneasy...about being caught with a conviction from which we cannot hastily retreat, a point of view that has no convenient hedge, or a commitment that is anything but conditional" (1977, p. 37). In short, college spokesmen are behaving like educators elsewhere when they artfully maneuver around firm or fixed positions.

Another good reason is that rational commentary is essentially unimportant when measured against the criterion of institutional survival. The colleges suffer self-serving pap from their purported spokesmen because they must fight for funds and support in a political arena where legislators and taxpayers attend to the most apparent good. If marine safety departments, welfare agencies, parks and recreation departments, and water reservoirs all need money just as the schools do, each must be justified. No apologist can be genuinely critical; all contention must be minimized. The art of considering consequences and alternative philosophies is lost in the immediacy of reacting to political and fiscal pressures. Not only the bottom line, but the top and middle lines as well must be that the institution is performing a service that the community cannot do without.

And so the speeches are made, the papers written, and the testimony given. And so the institutional research directors get their instructions: "Follow up the graduates and ask them if they liked it here. Survey the people from neighborhoods that send few students to the college and ask them what they want. Find out what types of courses have been successful in other institutions. But above all collect the kind of data that I can use to justify the program."

I am beginning this talk by deploring the lack of a categorical imperative because I feel that this lack denies many things; not least it denies our

constituencies the example of a professional group relating their activities to a vision of coherent goals. But I'm not going to dwell on that; instead I want to examine two recently levelled charges as though there were definitive philosophical underpinnings in the community colleges. If there were, what responses would we make to the charge that we do not enhance social equality but in fact help to maintain a class structure in America? If there were, how would we treat the mandate issued ostensibly on our behalf that we should direct our efforts toward community education?

Social equalization first. Last year Zwerling's book, Second Best, received a certain amount of commentary including several favorable reviews. His thesis: the community college contributes to keeping the class structure intact by giving people in the lower classes the illusion of progress when in fact it operates only to keep them in their place. Because people from the upper classes go to the prestigious universities where they are trained and recruited for high status positions, students who attend two-year colleges are condemned to be hewers of wood and drawers of water, to remain in their lower-class niche yet another generation. Pity the community college: when a theorist does appear he has to be a soi-disant Marxist!

Zwerling is not alone in his contention that the two-year college fails to enhance equality. Tinto studied patterns of college-going in Illinois and concluded that the number of low SES students who begin college does not increase when a community college opens (1975). What happens, he contends, is that many low SES students who would have gone out of town to school, stay at home and go to the local college. Since drop-out rates are higher at the community college than at the distant four-year institution that those students would have attended, the low SES students are less likely to obtain baccalaureate

degrees. Thus the two-year colleges do a disservice to the poor.

My own colleague, Sandy Astin, has fuelled this argument. In "The Myth of Equal Access" (1975) he shows that the University of California receives three dollars from the state for every dollar that goes to the community colleges and that people from high SES families are more likely to attend the university whereas the low-income groups go to the community colleges. Accordingly the structure of financing is regressive with the high-income families receiving more benefits for their tax dollars because the institution where their children go receives three times as much state money. Undoubtedly you have heard such arguments in other contexts and have your own sources to cite.

In an effort to understand the contentions I went back to the work of Lloyd Warner who coined some of the terminology to describe social class and found a book entitled, Who Shall Be Educated?, published in 1944. There, Warner and his co-authors discuss the place of the schools in the class structure of America, making such statements as, "The municipal junior colleges such as the Chicago City Junior Colleges, tend to draw students from lower-middle and lower classes" (p.71) while other types of colleges draw students from the middle, upper-middle, and upper classes. But they don't deplore the fact. Instead, they urge the schools not to deny the idea of class but to teach students what it is, how it operates. They say, "When first confronted with the fact of a class order in our country many Americans feel compelled by their sentiments to disbelieve the evidence and minimize its significance....Other people do accept the fact of unequal status as true and demand complete abolition of our status structure and the substitution of pure democracy" (p. 144). They say the schools should attempt to change these pernicious beliefs while helping individuals to move up in class if they are so qualified. And yet the schools

should take care that they produce a degree and kind of social mobility that is within the limits of a healthy society. They warn, "The American people believing in a myth of unlimited social mobility, send their children to high school and to college as speedways to place and power. If the educators attempt to regulate traffic, they are accused of being undemocratic, and they may lose the confidence of the public. Yet there is clear evidence that our educational system is now permitting too many to use high school and college for the purpose of attaining unavailable professional and managerial positions, with resultant failure and frustration and loss of social solidarity" (p. 158). And you thought that the issue of the overeducated American was new!

Since Warner's time the belief in the inevitability of the class structure has become less pronounced, confounded now with social justice, equality of opportunity, cultural deprivation, ethnicity, and a determination to correct the abuses historically heaped onto certain peoples. The fact that Blacks, Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans, and other identifiable ethnic groups tend to be overrepresented in the lower classes has contributed to this confusion. Americans historically have had as a common belief a distinct distrust of anyone who preached class consciousness. Now that distrust has become abhorrence of anyone who suggests the idea of class because the suggestion is tantamount to racism. And so those who say that the number of people with qualifications for top jobs is quite small, that by definition not enough high-status jobs are available, that other goals are worthwhile, and that people are not born equal but that they have diverse potentialities, are termed racists endeavoring to maintain their privileged position by keeping the lower classes in their place.

So Zwerling and Astin and Jencks and Karabel and others who have recently argued that the community college contributes to maintaining the class structure in America are not original. I say their arguments do not go far enough. Zwerling looked only at Staten Island Community College and other two-year institutions that draw predominately from the lower socio-economic groups. He could have as well looked at the colleges that serve the children of high-income families. Golden West College and Los Angeles Pierce College, located in suburban communities in Southern California where the average educational attainment of the head of the household is around grade 16 and where the average income is around $20,000, play the same role but at the opposite end. They help maintain the class structure by keeping the students from upper-income families from slipping back. With beautiful campuses and a variety of attractive instructional media they present a pleasant option to the surfing and joy-riding that might otherwise tempt these progeny of high SES families from going to college at all. And since college-going is a major contributor to the taste, income, and life style that marks a member of the upper classes, were these types of institutions not available, the less serious students might well fall out of class, in both meanings of the term.

Assume the community college is an element in maintaining the class structure in America, what of it? Zwerling deplores the charge and suggests teaching class consciousness in the two-year colleges so that the students become aware of their condition and strive to rise out of it. Here he is in accord with Warner. But he also suggests converting all two-year colleges into four-year institutions so that the people who enroll in them can obtain baccalaureate degrees with greater ease. Other com-

mentators have suggested equalizing funding so that two-year colleges, four-year colleges, and major research universities all get the same relative number of dollars from the state. Some have suggested that since all institutions cannot be equalized we should equalize the student bodies by educational entitlements and a national student lottery. And still others have suggested a form of guaranteed educational attainment as a corollary to equality of opportunity for admission, a suggestion put most recently by Herbert Reid in a speech to the National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education (Winkler, 1977).

And so we have run past the community college as an agency enhancing equal opportunity. When we are considering the unreconcilable problem of social equalization, we are presented Draconian solutions. For those who try to deal with class differences have been shunted aside by those who see racism in the very idea. Those who push vigorously for reduction in inequality seem not to understand that progress toward equality of opportunity does not lessen inequality of condition; it only rearranges the population. As Bowen points out, "If every vestige of discrimination based on race, ethnicity, sex, age, physical appearance, and so on were eliminated, inequality of condition would not be significantly lessened" (1977, p.91). People would still see others as better or worse off, brighter or less bright than themselves.

Suppose we converted all two-year colleges into four-year institutions? Would all colleges and their students then magically become equal? There is a pecking order among institutions that even now are ostensibly equal. Allowing all colleges to offer the same degrees would do little to diminish public perceptions of their relative merit; it would merely

establish a bottom stratum of former two-year colleges.

Suppose we equalized funding? Would the colleges then contribute less to the maintenance of a class structure? I don't know what would happen to the two-year colleges if sizeable funds were diverted from the universities; perhaps they would teach better. Perhaps not. But I do know that the major research universities would be crippled. "Fine," say the commentators. "Social equalization can take place by chopping down the top institutions quite as effectively as it can by uplifting those serving the lower groups." And so the suggestion that we cripple the universities as a way of minimizing the benefits obtainable by high SES students is sometimes put.

Another way of equalizing the benefits derived from going to institutions of unequal stature is to impose a lottery whereby each college would select its freshmen class by drawing at random from a pool of names of all individuals who had indicated a desire to go to that institution. The students' way would be paid by vouchers and, since all had an equal chance to get into Harvard or Stanford, all would have an equal chance to become physicians or corporate attorneys. A few years ago the City University of New York tried something like that with results as disastrous as they were predictable.

The belief that colleges should guarantee some form of equality of results bodes to gain more and more adherents. For it should have been obvious that as equality of opportunity expanded so that more members of all groups went to college, the demands for equality of effect would increase. We simply cannot expect to invite any person regardless of qualification to attend without assuming some responsibility for the outcome. We simply cannot go out into all the neighborhoods and plead with people to come to the institution without expecting that those same people are going to want some guaranteed benefit. We had best learn quickly how to create a sizeable proportion of silk purses because the sow's ears are going to demand increasingly to be transformed.

The question of social equalization can be summed by saying that the community colleges are no more able to overturn the class structure than the lower schools were. All schools are relatively low-influence environments when compared to say the taxing structure. We could move rather quickly and effectively toward the goal of equalizing incomes if we put an absolute ceiling on what anyone could earn from whatever source and simply confiscated all the rest. Social justice may demand that we allow qualified Blacks to enter medical school but it is just as foolish to say that social equalization will have been achieved when we do as it is to say that the reason we need Blacks in medical school is because the ghettos lack physicians.(A $40,000 a year federal tax rebate to physicians who move their offices to South Central Los Angeles would empty half the medical buildings in Beverly Hills. And an offer to pay the premium on their malpractice insurance would empty the other half). Charging the schools with the

task of effecting that which we as a society do not really want to happen is an old American gambit.

The shift in the meaning of educational equality from individual to group mobility has been pernicious. When equal opportunity meant allowing people from any social, ethnic, or religious group to have the same chance to enter higher education as people from any other group, the goal was both worthy and attainable. The conversion of that concept to group mobility changed its meaning and put it beyond the reach of the schools. The question is one of access for individuals and the community college as the main point of entry and reentry into higher education for all individuals plays a part.

In the 1930's 150 people of every thousand went to college. Now more than three times as many go. In 1944 Warner said that social mobility would be enhanced if scholarships were made available to 2 or 3 percent of the college aspirants. What's the figure now on financial aids, grants, benefits, and scholarships? And along with expansion of opportunity has come a decline in the economic benefit of college going. Quite naturally — the scarcity value has diminished. But although college as an agent of mobility between classes has lost much of its former power it still so operates. For when nearly everyone has a degree, who can afford to be without one?

The community college cannot break down class distinctions; nor can it move entire groups from one social stratum to another. Joseph Ben-David analyzed higher education in many nations and

concluded, "Higher education appears to have been primarily a channel of individual mobility... It can provide equal opportunities to all and it may be able to help the disadvantaged to overcome inherited educational disabilities. But it cannot ensure the equal distribution of educational success among the classes or other politically active groups" (1977, p. 158).

We must learn how to teach individuals better. And to me, the verb, "to teach," is not arcane; it means leading a learner from one measured point of skill, attitude, or ability to another. This cannot be done for individuals if we confound it with moving whole groups. It cannot be done for individuals if we confound it with overturning the social class structure in our country. And it cannot be done by arguing that since many students neither transfer to senior institutions nor get an associate degree we should stop teaching the liberating arts and sciences and give the students a marketable skill before they leave the educational system. That question, the question of whether community colleges should become predominantly vocational institutions, is the most critical policy issue facing your colleges in the years ahead. For as you give up trying to teach generally, liberally, and comprehensively, you will tend to accentuate the class-based tracking that you are charged with doing now.

Let me turn now to the idea of community education that is being promoted vigorously by many adult educators, college administrators,

and state and national professional associations. I must confess I have never fully understood the term. "Community education," like "community service" and "community-based college" seems a catchphrase used to justify a hodgepodge of hobby courses, recreational events, and other non-credit, non-academic, activities. Anything other than a sequenced curriculum seems to fit — like allowing the Garden Club to meet in the college board room. But that definition covers such a plethora of trivialities that I thought I was missing its essence. There must be more to community education than its serving as an excuse for opening the swimming pool to the public in the summer or for the college's offering to fill out income-tax returns for anyone free of charge.

Consequently, in an effort to better understand the calls for a "new mission" I began to look more closely at the messages delivered by those who are promulgating it. What are they talking about? The Director of Community Services for Los Angeles City College offered the following assessment recently (Ware, 1977).

"The question that needs to be answered is this: Do our Community Colleges have as part of their mission the responsibility of the pursuit of community as well as the pursuit of knowledge?" And he says they do and that the "creation of a Community Services Department separate in purpose from all other instructional departments was tangible evidence of an intent to serve the public in pursuit of a sense of community by providing services different from but related to the pursuit of knowledge traditionally provided by all the departments of instruction." A sense of community, not the pursuit

of knowledge.

As evidence of the Los Angeles City College Community Services Department's pursuit of community, he offers, inter alia, a 32 member advisory council who in the process of helping the college decide on community-based education develop a sense of community among themselves and among the 120 non-credit class instructors and 2000 participants in those classes. The department's activities include an annual Health Fair, a Women's Day, an International Day, and a Salute to Senior Citizens Day. "I submit that in our fourth year of presenting these annual events, a tradition is developing in our community, a tradition of annual events whose objective is the pursuit of a sense of community . Our success is attested by the large number of participants who come to these events," says the director. The act of planning, teaching, and participating in the recreation programs, arts and crafts classes, dance classes, and personal help workshops is thus purported to be the essence of community building. By this definition community is fostered when a group of people are engaged in a common activity, any common activity. And the anticipation of events helps build community as well.

Another avenue often recommended is that the colleges act as catalysts or coordinators for services offered by others. Thus the colleges would find out what needs to be done, do it themselves, or contract with other agencies to provide the services. They would be the coordinating agents for public service agencies, proprietary schools, and numerous other publicly and privately funded institutions. This extension of service would find the colleges offering credit for learning wherever it was attained, sending students to other schools, sanctioning all forms of prior and concurrent experience. The most marked

example of awarding credit for experience that I have seen is in a Texas college that offers an Individualized Studies Degree. The student presents the college's coordinator with a list of the places he has travelled, the concerts and colloquiums he has attended, the jobs he has held, and the coordinator decides how many credits they're worth and suggests further experiences —which may or may not include college-sponsored courses or presentations — that the student might enjoy. Eventually a sufficient number of credits is accumulated and the degree is awarded.

The idea of coordinating other agencies that perform educative functions has grown from the community-service function. Many colleges have long offered presentations totally apart from the traditional campus-based courses. The activities are arranged, supervised, and presented by people other than the regular faculty and administrators. The participants are not regularly enrolled students. The costs come not from the regular instructional budgets. Why should the entire set of activities not be done by a different agency with the college serving but to coordinate and, in effect, accredit them?

Some Districts have built separate organizations to coordinate the community-service activities offered under college sponsorship and the activities presented by other agencies. The New Dimension College, Coastline College, and Peralta College of Non-Traditional Studies have been created in California in recent years to act as holding companies for the non-traditional, off-campus credit and non-credit offerings, and for the awarding of credit for experiences

attained through other agencies. They have separate administrative organizations and budgets. They may well become totally separate entities, at least as separate from the colleges as university extension programs are from the main body of university teaching. The ultimate realization of such a role would be the college that has no campus or faculty but which exists as pure form or idea orchestrating all educational, cultural, recreational, and community building activities. John Wood Community College in Illinois is an example of this type of organization.

Why now? Why are the colleges so concerned with community building, non-campus forms, awarding credit for experience, and sanctioning educative activities offered by other agencies? Can it be that they have given up trying to teach and to measure student learning and now hope only that other social institutions can do it? Few of the colleges that award credit for experience insist on assessing whether or not those experiences have changed the individual; they tend to act on the faith that something must have happened.

Why are they so concerned now with building a sense of community? Do their efforts stem from nostalgia? For certainly the commuter college is not the ivy-covered college on the hill. There, when students left their homes and went behind an iron gate to live together for a number of years, there was certainly community building.

There were old school ties, alumni loyalties, reunions, homecoming, innumerable shared experiences. The earlier community colleges attempted to build some of that spirit into their own students with mixed success, marginal and none. Are they trying to do it now in another way, viewing the entire community as the student body?

When the colleges offer to provide a link for all community education efforts they seem to be offering a useful service and perhaps they are. But why now? Why are they so anxious to convert the costs of those services to the tax-payer and to the immediate recipient? For many of those services that can be attained through proprietary schools at a cost to the student become tax-supported activities when the college sanctions them. Glendale College (California) has no cosmetology program of its own but has a contract with a proprietary school that offers the program. Students may attend there and get college credit. The district pays the school for its services.

A clue to the reasons why the colleges are moving vigorously in the direction of linkage activities, credit for experience, and contractual arrangements was provided by Andrew Korim who said that the colleges that fail to do it will "lose their favored positions in their communities"(1976). It sounds as though he is saying they will lose political and fiscal support. Claude Ware also has said "In the final analysis what we do for students in our support program becomes translated

into students who willingly vote tax dollars to support the institution and who become taxpayers with a keen sense of affinity with the college." It may be that the colleges despair of competing with the university for support in the legislatures that are dominated by state university alumni. They may despair of competing for support in the corporations and philanthropic foundations whose board rooms are staffed with alumni of the prestigious private institutions. They may be turning to their local constituents, fearing thatif they do not give them the appearance of providing a variety of types of community building and linkage functions, they will lose even that support. And it may also be that the colleges are tempting to head off competition from proprietary schools and four-year institutions in their district, staking out a ground for themselves in anticipation of a time when all funding runs directly to students through individual vouchers and entitlements.

The idea of maintaining support is certainly more understandable than that of community building. For if community building depends on face to face interaction, it would better be fostered by breaking up the large campuses into units of not more than a few hundred students each. And if community building is the major purpose of the community-services departments, the colleges should abandon the television courses that they often present as part of their community-service function; TV beamed to individuals sitting in their own homes is the antithesis of community building. If building a sense of shared values, common goals, and belief systems is the purpose toward which they strive, and if any

agency that adds to a sense of community in this fashion is in fact in the business of community service, then the colleges have much competition. Any fast-food franchise provides a sense of community. Each customer has common expectations, shared values as to the desirability of a certain type of food, a sense of place afforded by the common decor in all the outlets, and common beliefs in the virtue of the hamburger. If any assemblage adds to a sense of community and if the purpose of the assemblage is not material, then sporting events that attract people by the tens of thousands, programs presented by parks and recreation departments, anything that brings people together will suffice. If so many other agencies are doing it, why should the community college be bothered with it?

The essential question in community education is more basic than administrative and fiscal matters. It has to do with concept and purpose. The colleges have labored hard to get a position under the umbrella of post-secondary education. They have laboriously created learning laboratories, remedial programs, and numerous instructional media forms that are designed to teach. They offer a sequenced, measured, graded curriculum that differs from the diffuse, unsequenced presentations that typically fall under the rubric of community education. I am differentiating carefully here. By definition

a curriculum leads a person from one measured point of knowledge, skill, attitude, or ability to another. Students and teachers take definite roles within it. It has a body of content, defined objectives, measured entry and exit points. (Th fact that many curriculums fail to include all those elements does not change the definition.)

A set of presentations is something else. It need not have measured entry (anyone can attend) or measured exit. The presentors need not assess its effects on the viewers. It can be sent out in any form, viewed by anyone. It promises nothing.

Failure to understand the different between courses and curriculum on the one hand and presentations that may or may not have an effect on the viewer leads to pathetic confusions. Learning in the graded courses remains unmeasured. Teaching is defined as presenting information rather than as a sequence of events organized deliberately to cause learning. We ask the students if they enjoyed the experience rather than determining how they have changed. And we assign course numbers, course descriptions, and other accoutrements to the presentations and do surveys asking if the viewers enjoyed the experience.

The real difference between college as a place of learning and community education as a concept is not between serving youth and serving adults, not between credit and non-credit courses, not between academic and vocational programs, not between the serious and the recreational. It is between curriculum and presentations. That is the most critical educational issue for it is basic to the difference between learning and the illusion of learning, between serving individuals by enhancing their knowledge

and giving them certificates that are of ever-lower value.

The colleges cannot, will not, should not, try to overturn the class structure of American society. They can, will, and do make it easier for a person to move between classes. The colleges cannot make learned scholars of television-ridden troglodytes. They can and should show their constituents what it means to be involved in a community where learning is revered. As long as the community college maintains its place in the mainstream of graded education, it provides a channel of upward mobility for individuals of any age. Those who deplore its failure to overturn inequities between classes do a disservice to its main function. Those who seek to expand its community education activities tend to confuse the people who have looked on it as the main point of access to, exit from, and reentry to higher education--the lungs of the system.

The college leader who would uplift his community would point out the distinctions between social equalization and equal access, between overturning the class structure and allowing people to move from one stratum to another. He would show that the difference between a course and a presentation is in concept; it is more than a shell game played with numbers and titles and tax dollars. He would help his colleagues and constituents realize that the college that teaches best uplifts its community most.

People must learn in college, or what's it for? All the talk of equalizing society and uplifting the community comes to that. More learning equals a better college; less learning a poorer college; no learning, no

college. Calling an agency that does no more than link other agencies a college is like calling Merrill Lynch a farm because it brings together people who want to buy and sell soybean and wheat futures. A broker is a broker. And just because the community colleges try to serve older people, handicapped people, and others never before served by the higher education establishment doesn't mean they need abandon their commitment to teach. If they have not abandoned that commitment they should certainly re-examine their interpretation of it. What evidence do they have for believing that doing away with the traditional elements in the structure of higher education--courses, grades, credits, certificated instructors, academic departments, campuses--will perforce lead to better education?

A group's support depends on their perceptions of the institution's value and purpose. What does the public--and the profession--see now? Day after day, visitors come to the Clearinghouse: parents of college-age children, aspirants to governing boards, members of foreign education ministries, college trustees. Many of them are confused by what they see the colleges doing. They want to know what questions to ask, whose answers to trust. They ask about the meaning of such activities as workshops on macrame at the senior citizens' centers; credits granted for attending activities; and forums, presentations, colloquiums, etc. open to the public. "What is happening in the colleges?" they want to know. "Can we afford all the new things they are doing? Why are they doing them? Whom are the colleges teaching and how well? Have they abandoned their commitments to their traditional academic and occupational programs?"

I don't know how to answer them. Do you?

UNIVERSITY OF CALIF.
LOS ANGELES

JUL 15 1977

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JUNIOR COLLEGES

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